

# **SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL**

## **HABITAT & ECOSYSTEM COMMITTEE**

**The Beaufort Hotel  
Beaufort, North Carolina**

**December 7, 2023**

### **Transcript**

#### **Habitat Committee**

Trish Murphey, Chair  
Mel Bell, Vice Chair  
Dr. Carolyn Belcher  
Gary Borland  
Tim Griner  
Judy Helmey  
Kerry Marhefka

Jessica McCawley  
Tom Roller  
Robert Spottswood, Jr.  
Andy Strelcheck  
Laurilee Thompson  
Spud Woodward

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#### **Attendees and Invited Participants**

Shep Grimes  
Monica Smit-Brunello  
Dr. John Walter  
David Hugo

Jamal Ingram  
Dominique Lazarro  
Matha Guyas  
Miles Dover

#### **Observers and Participants**

Other observers and participants attached.

The Habitat & Ecosystem Committee of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council convened at The Beaufort Hotel, Beaufort, North Carolina, on Thursday, December 7, 2023, and was called to order by Chairman Trish Murphey.

MS. MURPHEY: All right, everyone. We'll get started on our Habitat Protection and Ecosystem-Based Management Committee. Just to also direct your attention that we have a new habitat staffer from the South Atlantic, that has replaced Roger, and this is Kathleen Howington, and I know she is going to be a big help to me, and I'm looking forward to working with her, and so welcome, Kathleen. I guess the first thing up is to approve the agenda, and do I have a motion to approve the agenda?

MS. MARHEFKA: So moved.

MS. MURPHEY: Kerry makes the motion to approve. We have a second by Gary, and no problems with that? Then the agenda is approved. Also, I need to approve the minutes from September 2023. Do I have a motion to approve? I've got Carolyn, and a second by Jessica. Any discussion? Any objections. So moved. Okay. All right, and so I guess, right now, we're going to turn it over to the Vice Chair of the Habitat and Ecosystem Advisory Panel, lovingly known as HEAP now, and so we've got Paul Medders, who is the vice chair, from Georgia online, and so, Paul, are you there?

MR. MEDDERS: Good morning, Madam Chairman. I'm here. Can you hear me?

MS. MURPHEY: Yes, sir, we can, and so I'll go ahead and turn it over to you.

MR. MEDDERS: Okay. Well, thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you for the opportunity to present this virtually and give the report on what the Habitat AP talked about in November. We had a presentation from the NOAA essential fish habitat consultation summary, and it was interesting to hear the way this was presented, in the sense of sort of -- I will use the word "triage", but in sort of triaging some of these consultations, and the report did include that additional staff is going to be hired, which I think will take maybe some of the heat off of them for these consultations.

The panel itself identified living shorelines and tide gates as emerging issues, especially with the rising sea levels that we're seeing, and the panel also requested more information to be discussed at the next meeting. Sort of as a side note, we've had some discussions, or I've brought this up several times, but just to consider the terminology of "living shorelines", because, as I've worked with other states, and other groups, I often wonder if that term is meaning the same thing to other people. I know, in our state, and our state agency, what we mean by living shorelines, but that's just something to consider.

We had several presentations on the essential fish habitat five-year review, and several of the -- Well, we had some talk about the buttonwood classification subcommittee report and should this be included in with essential fish habitat for mangroves, and Wilson Laney talked about the ongoing work in the prey preference subcommittee report, and we spent a -- Before the meeting, and then at the meeting, some of the talk about the freshwater boundaries and how we were going to delineate those, because I know, with sea level rise and essential fish habitat, and where that begins and ends, that's an important issue, and I know that -- I will not talk a lot about this, because

I know you all are going to be talking essential fish habitat this afternoon, and you all will cover a lot of this in those committee meetings.

We had a presentation, provided by the Southeast Conservation Adaptation Strategy, on the conservation blueprint, and it was a great presentation, kind of looking at this portal and how it would be used, and it's interesting, sort of that thirty-thousand-foot view and being able to drill down into the connectivity, and the committee felt like this was going to be helpful in the future, looking at habitat and temporal shifts for future concerns.

Offshore wind activities, we had a long discussion about offshore wind activities, and I know you all are going to be talking about that this afternoon again, and some of the things of note that we discussed were concerns about essential fish habitat movement into these windfarm locations and what's going to happen when these windfarms are decommissioned, and what are the decommission plans.

We discussed a lot about, like off of our coast here in Georgia, the Beaufort Navy towers that, at some point, will be decommissioned, and how fishermen have become -- Have become reliant on them, or have enjoyed them, and how they're essential fish habitat, and I think that decommissioning -- It's the same thing that I know happened with oil rigs other places, but that was a big concern of ours. There was some talk about acoustic receivers being placed on some of these windfarm locations, and the question came up, from our group, was the data that was going to be collected going to be private, because of the private nature of the wind farming, or is it going to be made public.

We talked a lot about the cable route from Kitty Hawk, and a lot about the potential to, when the cable is not buried deep enough, or can't be buried deep enough, using these concrete mat sort of things over the cables, to protect the cables, and what happens when that becomes essential fish habitat. The other one, that I thought was one of the most important, or one of the most interesting, comments that was made is there was a discussion of whether or not wind is a public trust resource, which I found very interesting, and so just you all consider that as your committee meets this afternoon and talking about offshore wind activities.

The essential fish habitat policy statement on energy, the panel recommends including offshore wind development in the energy policy, and they would like to move that to the forefront of the policy, and that's just a short version of what the panel talked about with this policy statement.

We had a great presentation about the Navy Atlantic fleet training, and the environmental impact statement involved with this training, and there was a couple of points to note that the -- There was a discussion of what the Navy does with their waste aboard ships, and, obviously, following all the MARPOL rules, and it was a really interesting discussion of how the Navy is trying -- How the Navy melts down that plastic, and how they're dealing with that plastic, and how they hope to recycle it.

The other part that really was of interest to the panel, that got a lot of discussion, was some of the pile driving experiments that they're using sturgeon with, and the committee wants to know more about that in the future, and I think everybody is probably interested in that study and what's going to come out of that.

The habitat blueprint, Roger presented an overview of the habitat blueprint, the review of the workplan that was going on, and there was a recommendation that long and short-term goals for the workplan be added, and the panel added future habitat concerns and outreach to the draft outline.

For the South Atlantic saltmarsh initiative, this was a great presentation about this coastwide initiative, and the panel recommended that the mapping of saltmarsh regions, and the focus, is state-specific and that just the idea of this network of people of combined resources, and resources being dedicated to create a region-wide map, and I think that's something that we've missed for a long time, and sort of how each state classifies saltmarsh, and all the different ways to classify saltmarsh, and how this initiative, with the goal of protecting saltmarsh, and diversity, is something that the panel has got great interest in, and so I think, as this project moves along further, it's going to be useful for a lot of what we're concerned with here.

The next slide is the space operations on east coast Florida, and this one generated a lot of talk, and we had the spaceport in Florida, and it was the space authority from down in Florida, and they were kind of talking through and representing -- Trying to represent all of the different spaceports around the country, while really focusing on what they do, and there was a lot of talk, from the panel, during this presentation. There was concern about what debris, over the years, has gone into the ocean, and that it has unknown origin. There was some talk about what these materials are comprised of, and a lot of this was sort of tabled waiting on the -- There's been a FOIA request to the Coast Guard to try to understand what is used, and what's gone on the last ten years.

There was discussion, and concern, about what the debris was, where the debris is, and what depths and how much this debris is moving around. We had a good, lively discussion about, as launches increased, that the closed areas may, in effect, close fisheries, and there was a lot of concerns about, and, if a statement is drafted, in the future, about space operations, that it needs to speak to a global scale, and there was a lot of discussion about the launch locations, and then some of the retrieval locations, and a lot of discussion about the oceans overall being one big ocean, and that we need to look at that from a global scale.

We even had some discussion about, as future spaceports come online, how that will affect the boating public, and the fishing public, not only commercial fishermen, but recreational fishermen, and how they could be impacted, and so, Madam Chairman, that's an overview summary of what we talked about at the AP meeting, and, if there are any questions about things that were discussed at the panel meeting, I would love to take them now.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. Thank you, Paul. Thank you very much. That was very good. Do we have any questions for Paul? Paul, you did such a good job that -- Wait a minute. We've got one from Laurilee.

MS. THOMPSON: Going back to the slide about the windmill platforms, and what they're going to be made out of, have you guys had any conversations about that, the inclusion of nature-designed materials and the long-term impact of decommissioning projects? One of the written comments had some really good ideas about using materials that, you know, could turn it into an artificial reef and design it so that they could take the top part off of it and leave the bottom part out there, you know, as an artificial reef, when they no longer need it, and has the industry been approached about this, or is this just the beginning of a discussion in the Habitat Committee?

MR. MEDDERS: Thank you for the questions, and great point, and I think that, from the panel's recommendations, there was some talk about, if there are short-term parts of these projects, where something is going to be temporary, maybe while they're constructing, that it may need to discourage bioaccumulation, but then, when the longer-term projects, things that are going to be in the water longer, that they need to be inclusive of materials that would help habitats, and I think I would agree with where it sounds like you were going with the question of, once those things are out there, and established, and they are essentially acting like artificial reefs, we need to be concerned about the decommissioning process and these things being designed in a way that they can serve as fish habitat for the future.

It seems, much like I mentioned about the covering over of some of the cables that couldn't be buried all the way, and that covering is going to be -- If it's a concrete mat, a Flexamat type of thing, it's going to end up being great fish habitat, and so the discussion was that the cables need to be designed in a way that, if they have to be left down, because of the habitat we've created over them, that it won't be harmful to the environment, and I think that's what the panel was discussing, as far as ways to address that.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, Paul, and, Laurilee, we will be getting a presentation on the wind, maybe this afternoon, and so that will be a great question for them as well. Anything else for Paul? All right. Thank you so much, Paul.

MR. MEDDERS: Thank you.

MS. MURPHEY: I guess I will now turn it over to Kathleen, who will be going over the EFH five-year review.

MS. HOWINGTON: Thank you, Trish, and, yes, I am going to just give you a quick rundown, and I know that Paul just went over a little bit of this information, and so there are three working groups that are currently working on our EFH five-year review. There is the buttonwood clarification subcommittee report that has already made a recommendation, and they are recommending including a clarification of what mangroves are supposed to mean and include buttonwoods underneath the EFH designation in the user guide.

The limited FEP II update is just going to be including references in the FEP II, and so it is -- Like it's labeled, it's limited, but work is currently ongoing, and no recommendations have occurred out of that working group, and then the tidal freshwater boundary subcommittee report has also made a recommendation to include this linked map here that has upstream tidal boundaries, to further clarify where the freshwater-saltwater boundary ends.

Now, since I just took this position, I was interested in what guidance we had as to what an EFH five-year review was supposed to be, and I had never done one before, and, while I was looking at that, I found this report from the National Essential Fish Habitat Summit from 2017, which basically took what was in the Magnuson-Stevens Act and made it a little bit more readable, but, ultimately, this is what the objective of the review is supposed to be.

It is to evaluate and synthesize new information on habitat and determine whether changes to FMPs are warranted. It then continues, but I would like some feedback, from the council, on whether or

not you feel these three working groups that we're working on have met these goals, and hopefully, by the April meeting for Habitat, these working groups are complete, and their recommendations have been finalized, and they've written up a report, and this EFH review isn't finished until December of next year, and so we have a little bit of extra time.

Council staff has scheduled a meeting on January 11 with the Habitat Conservation Division, to get their feedback on whether or not they feel that this review is adequate, but I wanted to bring it before the council and ask you for any feedback that you could give me on what you think the next steps should be.

MS. MURPHEY: So does anybody have any thoughts on, I guess, first the three subjects of the subcommittees, being buttonwood, mangroves, the FEP, which I think, really, Wilson is working on just a reference update, and then the tidal-freshwater boundary work that Casey Knight, from North Carolina, is working on? Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: Just a curiosity question about the tidal-freshwater boundary, and is that -- I assume that's intended to define those boundaries based on ecological function, and not legal terms, because I think a lot of states have -- You know, I know that, in Georgia, we have physical reference points, bridges and stuff like that, that actually defines it, which we know is not related to the function, but, from a legal standpoint, it puts a point on a map that you can then say, on this side, you are and, on this side, you're not, and so I'm just curious.

MS. MURPHEY: This is more -- I don't remember all the details, but it is more ecological, you know, salinities, and I think probably flow and stuff like that, and so it's not a legal thing. We've got Chip.

DR. COLLIER: Just to build on that a little bit, when I was talking with Casey about it, her main goal was to help people that are applying for projects, and it's basically saying that, below this point, you are likely to have an EFH review, and, above this point, you're not likely to have an EFH review, and so it's mainly efficiencies for people that are going to be potentially impacting the EFH and whether or not they would have to do some kind of review.

MS. MURPHEY: Thanks, Chip. Any other discussions, or questions, or thoughts on this EFH review? We've got basically a year, and I think we've made some very good progress, at least on buttonwood and the tidal boundary, and so any questions or thoughts? All right. Then we'll just move right along to the habitat blueprint, and, again, it's Kathleen.

MS. HOWINGTON: You all are going to be hearing from me a lot in the next hour. Okay, and so, in September of 2023, the council approved the new habitat blueprint and job description. Part of the blueprint is you gave two actionable items that I would work on, one of which was developing a habitat blueprint workplan, and so this is a workplan that's going to be going through the next five years, or even longer, of what will be happening at each Habitat AP meeting, what some end goals will be, and hopefully coming up with some long-term stretch goals for what we want from the Habitat and Ecosystem Advisory Panel.

The other one was an annual report that you wanted to receive once a year addressing habitat activities throughout the Southeast region, and so I'm going to pull up our workplan first. This is

what I have drafted from the blueprint, and so the version you got was Word, but this is my Excel version.

The first section that we have is blueprint-specific, and so, eventually, this will go away, but part of the blueprint was you wanted us to look through the tools and partners evaluations, and that work is ongoing. I am converting those to tables, and we are going to be addressing what tools we have, what partnerships we have, what the cost-benefit analysis is, and so that will be coming to you soon. Then, of course, there's the EFH review that we just discussed, and so that work is ongoing, and I'm hoping that the subcommittees will be finalized in April, and then you all will be receiving that review in December of next year.

Then there's the website transition. I actually have a meeting scheduled next week to start determining what is on our webpage, what is needed, what's the best way to produce communication and outreach materials using what we have, and that goes to the communication strategy development, and I actually was able to present at the most recent Outreach and Communications AP, let them know what was coming in, but, until I start working on the website, I can't start working on the outreach, and so that December of 2023 was a little bit too hopeful on my end, and I apologize, and it's more likely going to be more January or February of 2024, and so I apologize for that.

Then implementing any EFH recommendations, that should be occurring starting at the end of next year, and so we're hoping to work on that, and then we go to the council AP requests. Right now, what I have on our to-do list is discussing the loss of artificial reefs, and this is from the September 2023 council meeting, and you all requested that that get added to the workplan, and then, of course, the space program impact on habitat, and we are waiting on the FOIA information before we feel like we can move forward on that discussion.

We are working on the energy policy for the inclusion of wind energy, and that should be finalized in April of this next year, and then tide gates and living shoreline projects, and we were informed, during the November AP meeting, that these projects are increasing, and so the Habitat AP wants to review what these are, clearly define what they are, and then try to evaluate what the impacts of these projects increasing on habitat could be long-term.

Then, finally, the AP wanted to review the Sackett versus EPA impacts, and this was a recent ruling that potentially could decrease wetland protection, and so they want to try and look what that impact could be long-term, and then, finally, we have reoccurring Habitat AP activities, and that's the workplan update, and I want to have every single advisory panel review this, and keep it up-to-date, and be able to bring it to you and say this is what we're working on, and these are our long-term goals.

The annual report, like I said, you all are going to be receiving that once a year, and so that's every other meeting that we will be reviewing that, so we can submit it to you. Citizen science updates, I'm hoping to be able to get those once a year as well, and EFH consultations, and we're hoping to get an update on what's been going on that year, hopefully every meeting, or maybe every other, depending on workload.

Then, finally, if you scroll all the way down, we have our very long-term goals, and this is more of a we're hoping to be able to try and tackle these, and, of course, the EFH review has to happen

five years from now, and so that one is on the books already, for what year we're going to be tackling that, but then these are the others that the Habitat AP expressed an interest in looking into, and so I will be, or we will be, exploring these and seeing what the Habitat AP can look into and what outcomes can come out of exploring these.

Then, if you just look at -- I have Xs for when I'm hoping the AP can have these discussions, and, anything that's in blue, we're hoping to finalize the discussions in that meeting, and some of these are an estimate. This is the first time this workplan has ever been developed, and so, if you have any feedback, please let us know, and I will make certain that this can come to you after every single AP, and you'll be able to keep track of what's been getting worked on and what's been getting finalized.

MS. MURPHEY: Any input for Kathleen on the workplan here? Laurilee.

MS. THOMPSON: It's a question, and this is great. I'm so excited to see us moving along on habitat. The website transition, and so is there an existing website, and is it like a subset of the SAFMC website, or is its own standalone, separate website?

MS. HOWINGTON: No, and there is an existing habitat website on SAFMC. When we transitioned from the old website to the new, we realized that the habitat website, or the habitat page, had a lot of information on it, and a lot of it was very wordy, and not very easily consumable, and so I'm going to work with our outreach team to try and get all of that information that Roger had accumulated over thirty-eight years of work and come up with the best way, and the most efficient way, for people to be able to find a lot of that information, because a lot of it seems to be -- A lot of the links to tools that we had seem to be hidden, and so we are going to -- That's what that is meant to entail.

MS. THOMPSON: Thank you.

MS. MURPHEY: I was going to add that I think, also, you're going to be looking at things like who is using the tools there, who is the audience for those tools, and stuff like that, to really streamline how it goes. Any other input from folks on the workplan? Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I hope that I don't upset Laurilee, but I think, because the space program impacts are so new, in terms of us trying to understand them, we probably will need to be a little more realistic, in terms of kind of the timeframe for the AP to consider that. I would be surprised if we would be able to kind of make final recommendations in the spring, and then, with the FOIA process, who knows when you might actually get that response. The other comment, I guess it's related to artificial reefs, and I'm kind of confusing the blueprint with the EFH, but artificial reefs are not considered EFH, correct? I don't remember exactly our definitions.

MS. MURPHEY: I believe they are considered EFH.

MR. STRELCHECK: They are considered EFH? Okay. We've talked about this more in the Gulf of Mexico, and I don't know how much of it has come up in the South Atlantic, and so there are studies, and research, out there in terms of the value that artificial reefs provide as habitat, but they also provide challenges, and issues, for fisheries management, because they aggregate fish, and increase catch rates, and so I think, as part of that conversation, we need to also be looking at



the broader implications of that aggregation of fish, and consequences to fishing mortality, for the species that we manage.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. Laurilee.

MS. THOMPSON: I did notice that you were only going to talk about space program impact on habitat at one meeting, and, for that, I am eternally grateful. The fact that this council is even talking about it means a lot to me, and to the environmental community at home, and I was really glad to see that you've added the Indian River Lagoon flow as a separate item and that you'll be talking about that at three meetings, and so I'm happy. Thank you.

MS. HOWINGTON: So I changed some wording, because I agree with you that we're hopeful that we'll get the FOIA before April, and, if we do, then I have clarified that we will have the reaction to the FOIA, and we will develop next steps at the next meeting, and we will not finalize anything in one meeting, and that was never my end goal, and I just figured that we would at least start the conversation, hopefully, but we can't start it until we get the FOIA information, which is why I have that in the notes of, if we don't receive it, then that would have to be postponed.

MS. MURPHEY: Anything else? Okay, and so I will take my turn now. Looking at the workplan, I mean, I think the list is great. I'm a little concerned about your workload for the spring of 2024, and maybe the loss of artificial reefs can be moved over, the space program, and, I mean, just listening to the guy that gave the presentation, and, to be honest, I don't think he gave the presentation that we were looking for, and it just seems to be the wild west for space now, it seems like, and so I wonder if that's another thing that you can elongate out in the timeline.

It won't fall off the list, and it's going to be ongoing, but I wonder if that's something to kind of move further out, and the only other thing was maybe -- I don't know whether the tide gate, and the living shoreline, could be pushed out a little bit more, and I can give you more feedback on that when we maybe talk, but -- When we start talking about the report outline and stuff, but I'm kind of wondering if you maybe can stagger some of this some more, because, I mean, spring of 2024 is pretty much blue there, and you're at thirteen, eight, nine, and nine, and so I would see if there's some things that you could maybe push on out, and so that's just my two-cents' worth. Tom.

MR. ROLLER: I am going to -- I will defer to you on the living shoreline and whatnot, but I would agree on the space program. Not to say that it isn't important, but we've had so many discussions over it, and we continue to discuss it, and it sounds like we need a lot of information before we can have it, and so it would probably be helpful to just kind of move it back, until we get some more of that stuff.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, Tom. Anything else? We've got Chip coming up.

DR. COLLIER: I will apologize to you right now, Kathleen, but the one thing I'm not seeing on there is, when we're looking at EFH classifications, there's basically four different tiers of classification for EFH, where it starts off at Tier 1, where it's just presence/absence, and that's where we are for, I believe, all of our species that we have, and one of my goals is to get us to move up to these different tiers of the EFH pyramid.

The end goal is to really figure out, you know, which areas are most important to the productivity of the stocks and to the fisheries, and those areas need to be protected the most, and so that would be a Tier 4. My goal would be to really identify some of these areas that maybe have a higher presence/absence, or a higher abundance, and that's the next tier, looking at Tier 2, and so I was thinking maybe that would go under Other, as a potential project to be working on, and this is going to be a long-term project. We do have a ton of species to work on, and several different FMPs to work on, and so you could probably put Xs across all of those, recognizing that, you know, we might need to focus on one FMP at a time, in order to make it not the elephant, and maybe just a little bit of steak that you're eating at each time.

MS. MURPHEY: Now I think that's a great idea, and I think, you know, we're slowly being able to get to at least Tier 2, and, actually, I think some of Casey's work is going to help with getting to beyond presence/absence, and to Tier 2, and so thank you, Chip. Anything else? All right. Next, we're going to -- Kathleen is going to go through the draft outline for the annual report, and so I will turn that back to her.

MS. HOWINGTON: One second, everyone. I'm taking notes. Chip talks quickly. There you go. Okay. Then the next thing that the blueprint discussed was the council receiving an annual report. If you go here, this is the exact -- This is what the report should entail, and it needs to address habitat and ecosystem conservation activities, it needs to highlight the use of habitat policies, provide advance notice of developing issues, and rely on tables, texts, and bulleted lists, and so the council staff developed an outline, and brought that to the Habitat and Ecosystem Advisory Panel in November.

The panel was able to review it, and they actually added in a few of the bullet points that are in black, and then any of the bullet points that are in red were their suggestions for things that they would bring to you in this coming spring, and so these are things that you may see in the report. Now, this is not limited. This is not the only thing you may see, but these were just, as they were reading through the outline, they were saying, oh, we can add this subject to this line, or we can do this, and so I wanted to take those ideas down, so you guys could kind of get an idea of what they were thinking that this outline would entail, and then I would love any feedback on whether or not we're hitting the mark on what you want to receive for this annual report, and, since this is the first one, I think I can say that we can be a little bit flexible. We'll try this first time, and, if it doesn't work, we'll try and try again, until we get an annual report that you all feel like is giving you essential information, but is not repeating what is in the advisory panel report.

MS. MURPHEY: I've got Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I think Robert is on the webinar and has his hand raised on a topic that we might have passed by.

MS. MURPHEY: I'm sorry, Robert. I didn't mean to miss you. Please go ahead.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: Hi, everyone. I just wanted, for the record, to reiterate some comments from our last meeting from our habitat experts, that artificial reefs certainly, from their perspective, were included in essential fish habitat, and so I just wanted to note that. Thank you.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, Robert. Any comments on the outline? Again, this is going to be the first time that this has been presented, and I guess we're kind of mirroring how the SSC works a little bit, because we have -- You know, this AP is made up of a lot of habitat experts, and so any feedback, or thoughts, on this so far? Okay. No feedback, and so can I give you mine? Is it all right for the chair to give you feedback?

MS. HOWINGTON: Of course.

MS. MURPHEY: Okay, and so, on the Number 3, status of the council habitat policy statements, I was just wondering how are we going to keep track of that, because, you know, there is different offices that do these comments, and will we be hearing from Pace, that is keeping a running count, or what, and that was just one thing, and what's the logistics of keeping up with that, and, I mean, I know they are used, but it might be hard to keep up with that.

MS. HOWINGTON: So my vision for how this is going to go, and, again, I am new here, and I was not here during the blueprint development, and so, Myra, correct me if I'm wrong, but, for this specific -- I would probably reach out to Pace and say, hey, in the last year, in the last six months, what policies have you used, and what have you submitted, and hopefully, after the first couple of times that I ask him that, he starts keeping track, but that would be a lot --

A lot of this is going to be my reaching out prior to the spring Habitat AP meeting and saying this annual report is coming up, and you filled this out last year, and please give me your bullet points underneath these questions, and trying to identify who the correct person to answer each question would be, and then getting the AP's feedback on that. Also, reaching out to the subpanels, and reaching out to the state agencies, and making certain that they can give feedback on these outlines and fill out their bullet points, and, again, trying not to make this a huge paragraph essay and making it tables, pictures, bullet points, summaries.

MS. MURPHEY: I think that will be great, and I was just concerned, but we'll figure out a way, and I would just think of it as a table, you know, and figure out what specific pieces of information, and, you know, how was it -- Was it used, yes or no, and did it make an impact, you know, things like that. My other comment was accuracy of existing statements to current activities, and that seems like a big lift, because it's going to require that all the policies get reviewed, and I'm not saying we shouldn't do it, but, again, I'm wondering about workload, and that might be kind of tough, but I see Myra coming over.

MS. BROUWER: I think the idea, with this, was actually to allow us to keep up with whether the policies are being effective, where we need to update them, or add information to them, and so I don't envision that as a very extensive evaluation of the existing policy, but mainly just, you know, what's Habitat Conservation using, which policies are the most useful for their consultations, or were the most useful for their consultations during that given year, and then determine, you know, where we need to focus, if the Habitat AP needs to be engaged in updating said policies.

MS. MURPHEY: Thanks, Myra. Then another comment, and sorry, but, in Number 4, you've just got this written out for potential future or developing habitat threats, and then you talk about living shorelines, and some folks may not see that as a threat, and so I wonder if you should just change that from "threats" to "issues". You know, I know living shorelines, in North Carolina, are becoming more and more prevalent, and there's been a push to change some of our laws and

stuff, and I am in no way saying that they are bad, and it's just they are -- You know, they're starting to get a little larger, and, you know, in some minds, not as natural as you would expect a living shoreline to go.

Then my last -- I think this is my last comment, but, on c, the impacts of sound and pressure from construction projects, there's a lot of work being done with ocean wind, and you can probably talk to those guys, but I've actually heard a couple of really good talks on acoustics and impacts to fisheries, that I can probably push you towards, and I think that's all my comments, and so anybody else? All right. Then I guess we're moving right along, and our next is the --

MS. HOWINGTON: It's me again.

MS. MURPHEY: Is that coral management?

MS. HOWINGTON: It's coral management.

MS. MURPHEY: Okay. What we've been waiting on, coral management.

MS. HOWINGTON: All right, and so then the next conversation is coral management, and there are two discussions that I want to bring before the council. The first one is about coral deepwater mapping. In September of 2023, this council actually received a presentation from Jeff Buckel on the modeling of distribution of deep-sea corals offshore, and the SSCs recommendations for what to do with this, and you guys have now had a couple of months to think about it, but I did want to give you a little reminder of this project used data synthesis and predictive modeling to relate the occurrence of DSCs and hardbottom habitats.

The study results was it was improvements over existing models for DSCs in the regions, and there, of course, were limitations, as with everything, but their recommendation was to promote the systemic sampling design intended to inform models of abundance and density, and so I will let you look over this for a little bit, because this is important.

Then the SSC -- Jeff Buckel informed us that the SSC deemed the model adequate to inform management, and consistent with BSIA, and it was noted that this modeling product can provide guidance for future mapping of deepwater coral ecosystems, and, when combined with recent years of extensive mapping and characterization, it would provide a baseline for consideration of a boundary extension of CHAPCs to encompass newly-discovered deepwater coral ecosystems, primarily on the Blake Plateau. Again, we gave you a few months to think about it, but does the council want to have any action related to this study? Do you want to consider initiating an amendment to designate and expand deepwater CHAPCs? Do you want to just try and consider this at a later date? What would you like us to do with this information?

MS. MURPHEY: So does anybody have some thoughts on this? Mel has his hand up.

MR. BELL: I mean, since you just asked, I think, in terms of what we might want to consider doing, or not consider doing, we have to go back and consider the rationale for why Coral 10 was rejected by the Secretary, and if we know anything more now than we knew back then, or if there's something that we could attempt to further explore, but I think simply just -- They're not sure about timelines on things, but just simply reinitiating a submittal, without additional information

and rationale, would probably be not particularly fruitful, but that's something to discuss, is what could we do, what should we do, and if we want to change the information we have related to our recommendation to move forward. I mean, we were comfortable with it last time, and then it was rejected, for the reasons that it was rejected, and so --

MS. MURPHEY: Mel, I'm sorry to interrupt you, but we were just on the deepwater coral stuff, but save your comments, and we'll be coming to Coral 10.

MR. BELL: Okay, and you were in general --

MS. MURPHEY: We'll look for you and we'll let you start.

MR. BELL: I had my hand up about something completely from the last topic, and so that's why it was --

MS. MURPHEY: Well, do you want to say something about that?

MR. BELL: Well, no, and, I mean, I can circle back, since you've shifted over to deepwater. Sorry.

MS. MURPHEY: No, no, no. You're cool. We'll let you go first when we get to 10, okay?

MR. BELL: That's cool. Thank you. Sorry, and you just kind of surprised me there.

MS. MURPHEY: Okay. Sorry. We're all new here.

MS. HOWINGTON: So then, for deepwater coral modeling, does the council have any next steps that they would like me to take with this information?

MS. MURPHEY: We've got Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Well, it's not just entirely modeling though, and there has been discovery of deepwater coral areas on the Blake Plateau, and that's been at least mapped to some portions of the range, right, and so, to me, and, I mean, I don't know the history with the council, in terms of establishing HAPCs for deepwater corals, but it seems like we would want to, obviously, consider a deepwater HAPC, given the new information. In terms of timing, that's up to, obviously, us, in terms of putting it on our work schedule, our workplan, and we can discuss that, if the council wants to move forward with a deepwater HAPC or they're interested in others.

MS. MURPHEY: Does anybody else have any other thoughts? I will go ahead and give you my thoughts. I'm wondering -- Well, to be honest, I'm not sure how hard of a process it is to go through for designating, and expanding, these coral HAPCs, and that's, I guess, a question for you guys, because I'm kind of thinking workload as well, and, I mean, is this an easy lift or a hard lift, and, if it's a hard lift, I wonder if it's best to put it off a little bit, and so I guess that's a question to you, is how hard, or how easy, is this?

MS. BROUWER: So, if the council wanted to initiate a -- It would probably take a plan amendment, and I can't quite remember if you can do -- I think maybe you can do HAPCs through

a framework. We have existing -- There's over 23,000 miles of deepwater coral HAPCs already that this council designated. My understanding is that the newly-discovered systems are adjacent to one of them, and I don't remember which, and so it would require sort of expanding one of the existing HAPCs.

It would be -- The process would be the same as with your regulatory amendments, and you would have to do scoping, and you would have to engage your Coral AP, and it would probably take at least a year, and so what I would, I guess, suggest is that, maybe when we get to the workplan discussion later this week, tomorrow, that you consider where we are with your other priorities and then determine if that's something you would like us to start working on right away, or next year, or what have you.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. Thank you, Myra. I think that's good. Is everybody all right with holding off until the workplan discussion, before we come back? Laurilee.

MS. THOMPSON: Yes, and I'm fine with that, and I was just wondering which HAPC is it next to.

MS. MURPHEY: I think we'll find out for you, and so we'll get back to you. Tom.

MR. ROLLER: I'm comfortable with that. I think, at the very least, we just need to have the conversation about how, and when, we roll it in.

MS. MURPHEY: If everyone is good with that, we'll just put that off until we discuss the workplan, and see where we are, and so is everybody good? Okay. All right, Mel, be ready. We're going for the Coral 10 resubmission discussion now, and so I'm going to turn it back over to Kathleen, one more time.

MS. HOWINGTON: Last presentation, guys. All right. So, to just give you a timeline and reinvigorate your memory of what's been going on with Coral 10, in November of 2021, this council approved Coral 10 for secretarial review and implementation. In December of 2021, the amendment was submitted to the Department of Commerce. In July of 2022, the council received a letter of rejection, stating that the amendment did not include adequate analysis to guarantee that the FMP would minimize the adverse effects of fishing on EFH and minimize bycatch, and so those were two things that the Department of Commerce rejected the amendment on.

Then, in September of 2022, the council received a presentation by Andrew David, from the Southeast Fisheries Science Center. This study concluded that all live colonies of oculina were found in the medium and high-relief habitat. They have never observed live or standing dead colonies on the low and no-relief areas, and no live, standing dead, or oculina rubble was observed in, or immediately adjacent to, the shrimp fishery access area.

Now, that does definitively state that no live oculina colonies are there, but that was their study, and they acknowledged that the survey provided no definitive evidence that oculina colonies did not exist, and, based on visual survey, and the existing multibeam bathymetry, they predicted the likelihood of oculina in the shrimp fishery access area would be very low.

The council discussed this, and they discussed the procedure for resubmitting Coral Amendment 10, and, in September of 2022, the council actually made a motion to resubmit Coral Amendment 10, after modifications. Unfortunately, due to staffing transitioning and to retirement, no steps have been made since then, and I apologize on behalf, and so I would just love your feedback on are you still interested in resubmitting Coral Amendment 10. If you are, do you want to resubmit it as-is, with no modifications, or do you want to add in say a potential bycatch assessment, some of the Andrew David literature, and would you want to try and resubmit it? If you do, we will need to add that to the workplan for staff. Additionally, it will take some time to add in any modifications that you see fit to add, and so --

MS. MURPHEY: All right, Mel. Did you want to provide your comments on 10?

MR. BELL: Yes, and sorry about that, and, actually, it's a little bit tied to the discussion we had about, okay, overall timing and planning and workload and everything, because the previous discussion, about the potential expansion of an area, yes, that's going to take time, and effort, and this would potentially take time, and effort, as well, because I think just simply -- This is open for discussion, obviously, but just submitting, at this point, unless we feel we've adequately addressed the rationale for rejection, would be kind of a waste of time, and so that's the question, is what other things might we need to have, in terms of data, and be more comfortable with, in order to submit, and that could take a little while, perhaps, and then it's a matter of funding to acquire those data, and that sort of thing, and so --

But I think my point is that I think there's -- We all felt comfortable with the amendment the first time we submitted it, and some deficiencies were pointed out, in terms of rationale, and so, you know, can we address those deficiencies, and how long would that take, and what would it take, but I think -- I mean, I would be comfortable with the council, at some point, resubmitting it, but it's just that, you know, the timing, and also adequately address -- Having adequately addressed the rationale for why it was rejected, and so that's for discussion, is what do we feel that we would need to know, other than what we know right now, and we have learned a little bit more since, obviously, as was pointed out, and so that was my kind of getting this thing going.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. Thank you, Mel. We've got Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I support still submitting Coral Amendment 10. I agree that it needs modification, and I think that one of the main things was the bycatch section, and I don't recollect that we need new data, and I think it's partly how the amendment is, you know, filled out, that maybe it wasn't -- That some of the sections weren't fully written, but this has been on the workplan, and we just didn't have a target date yet, and so maybe it's something, assuming that others want to move forward -- Maybe, when we get to the workplan, we talk about, you know, where to slot it in.

I guess we could talk now about how long we think it would take, et cetera, and does it need other types of modification, and so our motion said "with modification", and so I know that we wanted to fill out -- To address the deficiencies that were identified, like the bycatch section, and I'm not sure what other modifications we would like to make on that, but, yes, I'm in favor of moving forward with submission, or resubmission, of Amendment 10.

MS. HOWINGTON: So, other than the bycatch, the other critique was adequate analysis to guarantee the FMP would minimize the adverse effects of fishing on EFH, and so, if there's a study that we can add in, or include, that would be the other modification that I would recommend.

MS. MURPHEY: I've got Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Yes, and I want to go on the record as saying that I support resubmitting this. I think that, you know, it's pretty clear, and I think we knew it when we submitted it the first time, that there weren't going to be, you know, adverse impacts, and this area is far away enough from the actual area, and these fishermen have been adversely economically impacted for a good period of time, and they've been asking us for this for a really, really long time, and, just to remind everyone, or tell you, if you weren't here the first time around, if I recall correctly, it was never supposed to be where it was. It was a mistake, sort of a coordinate issue, and I think we've been trying to rectify it now for a really long time, and so I support doing what we need to do to beef it up, so that it is approved this time, and taking the time out to do it.

MS. MURPHEY: Do I have any other thoughts from anybody? Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Good discussion, and so I have no position on the resubmission. Obviously, it's been mentioned, in terms of the reasons for disapproval, and, you know, stronger justification, in terms of minimizing the effects on EFH, as well as how does this align with the goals and objectives of the Coral FMP, and so we have two essentially competing issues here between protecting EFH and the Coral Fishery Management Plan, as well as the Shrimp Fishery Management Plan, and then more of a procedural issue, but there wasn't a bycatch practicability analysis, and so that absolutely has to be added, if you're going to resubmit this.

The other comment I will make is we did get 350-plus comments on the rulemaking, and that represented, I think, over 30,000 people. There was a few other things that were raised, you know, and so it's not just the direct impacts of potentially a shrimp trawl net encountering oculina coral, and there was concerns about sedimentation on the reefs as well, and so I think those are things that we probably need to be talking about, and we also should be carefully looking at some of the tools that we just talked about, in terms of deepwater coral mapping, to see if there's any buffers, or areas, that we may want to consider adjacent to the oculina reef, that maybe haven't been mapped, or weren't discovered by the Science Center, and then it's already been pointed out that the Science Center has conducted a study in that area, and it's limited, but it is information that should be incorporated into the amendment, if you consider resubmitting it.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. Thank you, Andy. Anybody else? Laurilee.

MS. THOMPSON: Well, I have to admit that I was surprised when this popped up on the agenda. We felt pretty bruised after the last attempt, but, you know, we strongly believe that we do not impact the reef, and we dragged there for fifty years, and the coral appears to be healthy, and not damaged from our impacts, and we presented a very strong case, I thought, you know, as to why we would not be impacting the coral, especially from a direct impact, you know, due to the fact that the fishermen -- They police themselves, you know, and they stay at least a quarter of a mile away from the line, you know, just in case of that, in case the VMS is not functioning properly or anything, and they absolutely do not want to interact with the coral.



You know, a rig costs \$35,000 to replace, if you end up losing your doors and your nets and your cable, and they don't want that to happen, and they also understand that the oculina is essential habitat for rock shrimp, and why would they want -- Why would they want to mess with the habitat that's crucial for the rock shrimp? I guess I'm okay with moving along. Like I said, it was a surprise, and it's going to take a while to talk to the fishermen and get them -- You know, I mean, they're scattered everywhere.

I will say that they could have used that bottom this year, because, unlike last year, when the shrimp were basically on the inshore side of the reef, this year, they're on the offshore side, and not having this piece of bottom has hurt them economically, and, as Kerry stated, this piece of bottom was never intended to be included in the closed area.

It was a mistake, and the shrimp community was told, you know, at the time, that, if they would not, you know, make a big fight, and try to hold up the -- I don't remember which coral amendment it was, and maybe Coral Amendment 8, but, if they would not hold up the process of getting -- You know, it was very important that we get the northern expansion for protection of the oculina reef done, and so we were promised, at that time, that, if we would just be quiet, and let the amendment go through as it was, that it would be readdressed, and, you know, it took eight years for that to happen. Even though I'm not prepared today to argue this case, but, if you all want to move forward with it, put on your flack jackets.

MS. HOWINGTON: So, technically, you all already have a motion to resubmit, as modified. Monica, do we need to re-motion?

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: In my mind, that motion means the council then starts working on it, right, to address the deficiencies that were identified when it got disapproved, because there's no point in, like Mel said, sending it again in the same fashion, and so, you know, I would suggest forming some sort of IPT to look at how you address those deficiencies, as well as, you know, the document is a couple of years old, and we need to look, and make sure, that the data -- Any data that needs to be updated, you know, whether it's for economic analyses or anything else, that needs to be revised, and so that's my -- Those are my thoughts. When you say "resubmit it as modified", it hasn't been modified yet.

MS. MURPHEY: I'm going to let John speak up.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Thank you, Trish and Monica. So, you know, sort of the reason this is coming up is because we do have that motion that's out there lurking, without a time specified on it, and it is something that's one the workplan, and so we're really just looking for guidance, as it says, as to what you think about the timing, and is it something that -- You know, if a window of opportunity opens up to put something else on the schedule, which could happen in the latter half of this year, is that something that you would like to do, or would you like to, you know, keep it sort of sitting where it is for now and consider it again at another time in the future?

MS. MURPHEY: Are there comments? I'm going to let -- I think Mel is on. Let me let Mel, and then I will get you, Jessica.

MR. BELL: Well, Andy summed something up very nicely, which is, you know, what we have are you've got an FMP for deepwater coral, and you've got an FMP that allows for a fishery for

these deepwater shrimp, and they're kind of at -- You know, how do we balance the needs of both of those, the desire to maximize benefits of these public-trust resources from both of those, and it's a -- You know, it's a sticky spot.

The other thing, related to certainly the volume of public comment and all -- I mean, you're probably always going to have a hundred-to-one, or a thousand-to-one, related to, you know, the number of folks that see value in the deepwater shrimp aspect, versus the number of folks that can be garnered to see value, and talk about it, related to the deepwater coral, and that's just always going to play out that way, I think, and so that's not surprising, that you get, you know, that kind of difference in the amount of public input on it, but I think, at this point, it sounds like we're in a position to basically continue with the motion we had and all already, is just to continue moving in the direction of a resubmittal, but, you know, step one would be maybe looking at another meeting, looking at what are the things that we have, you know, and can we update the information from actually a couple of years ago, and where are we, and what would it take, but I don't see this being a front-burner kind of thing here, because, you know, we'll see that we've got many other things going on at the same time, and so maybe it's just kind of moving in that direction, but move in a calculated way, with making sure we've addressed everything that needs addressing and that we've put it in the hopper at the right time, where it can move forward once everything is addressed, but I don't see it as a real front-burner issue, and it's just let's kind of keep working on it.

I suspect that even our discussion of this right now will generate a lot of public comment, I would guess, which we'll receive, but that's where I think -- I think we can keep moving, and we don't have to move quickly, but we just need to move in a planned method, and, you know, we'll see where we are, balancing the overall schedule, as we kind of move into that.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. Thanks a lot, Mel. Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I agree with Mel, and I would like to look at it when we get to the workplan, and figure out where to go, you know, kind of make a calculated gameplan, kind of like we did with wreckfish, where we decided we wanted to move that forward, and we would move it forward, you know, at every other meeting.

I would like to think about that, and, at least for me, Coral Amendment 10 would be the priority over adding these additional areas, and so I'm just worried that coral is going to go to the bottom of the list, and here are two separate coral items that we want to work on, since we already have the motion out there on 10, and it's been sitting out there basically for over a year, and I would like to figure out how to slot-in 10, but I'm fine having that discussion when we get to the workplan.

MS. MURPHEY: John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Just to the point Jessica made, you know, a lot of times, we start an amendment when there's been an assessment, getting that assessment report, and so maybe, in this case, the start could be a meeting where you want to receive a report from the IPT that looks at it and says, you know, sort of what's the status of it, what would need to be updated, what do they see as a realistic timeline for doing the work, and then I think, you know, maybe that's something that comes up in say December, when we look at the timeline, right, and then we see would the

amendment flow from that point. I would go there, and then maybe to the scoping, or the advisors or whatever, but I think that's the first step to keep in mind, and then we see where that schedules, and the rest falls in place.

MS. MURPHEY: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Just that I agree with Jessica, in that this would be a higher priority, for me, than any new HAPCs, deepwater coral HAPCs, because they've been waiting a very, very long time for this.

MS. MURPHEY: All right, and so what I am hearing is that we will have further discussion on this when we get to the workplan. Okay, and I just -- For the record's sake, I want to just let, you know, people be aware that we are already getting comments from the public on this issue, and so I just kind of wanted to add that to the record. Anything else? Any other business? I'm sorry. We've got to approve the agenda topics. Kathleen.

MS. HOWINGTON: So a lot of these agenda topics you've already seen. We do have a hand raised. Trish, we have a hand raised from Mel.

MS. MURPHEY: Okay. Mel.

MR. BELL: Well, that was delayed again, and I can wait until after you're finished, Kathleen, and then I just was going to make a comment that went back to the original reason that I had my hand up long ago.

MS. MURPHEY: Go for it, Mel.

MR. BELL: Okay, and I'm not trying to get you out of sequence here, but it was way back when we were talking about artificial reefs, and then Andy said some things, and then Robert came on, but, you know, I was just going to comment that, since I have some experience in that area, and going back a few years, is that the concept of fully understanding the aggregation, versus production, or understanding the impacts on fishing, and fishing behavior, of artificial reefs -- It's honestly not that much different from existing geologically-based natural hard bottoms. It's just that, you know, once an area is found, that it serves the same principle.

It's structure on the bottom, with reef built on the hard substrate, but, you know, going way back, I had the opportunity to be involved in finding new hardbottom, and, when those new hardbottom areas were found, or undiscovered ship wrecks and that sort of thing, but, when those things were discovered, they were always extremely abundant, in terms of biomass there, and then, once the numbers got out, and this is when Loran-C was becoming in vogue, and people could afford it, and, you know, that led to the ability to really heavily fish these areas, and it didn't matter if they were natural bottom, or they were a shipwreck, or they were an artificial reef that we created, and so they functioned in the same manner there, but, with artificial reefs, we have the ability to plan, and to utilize, those as a tool for fisheries management, and the tool can be used in more ways than one.

I think South Carolina has done a very good job, over the years, of incorporating, into our reef management plan, and use, trying to utilize man-made reefs in a capacity to allow stock building,

stock enhancement, right, because we have a number of reefs that are -- Well, all of our reefs are actually designated as special management zones, and have a little bit of additional regulatory protection, but then some of our reefs now are special management zones, and two of them are with, you know, no harvest allowed of snapper grouper species, and so we're utilizing them to allow for rebuilding of stocks.

Then we had a third one, of course, which is technically an MPA in deepwater for that same purpose, and so a point is that I would just -- The council should, in the future, consider the use of artificial reefs as how they could be helpful as a tool used in a slightly different way. We don't just build it and fish it, but we build it, and we build it for stock rebuilding, stock enhancement, purposes, with some fishing, like in the Type II concept, you know, where you can fish for pelagics, maybe, and not the bottom fish, but that's just something I think this -- It's a tool that could help us in the future, and, even from yesterday a little bit, we heard discussion of the utility of closed areas, open areas, or, you know, that sort of thing, and that is where, of course, on a perhaps slightly smaller scale, artificial reefs could be a very useful tool to us in the future.

I think, with the ones we have off of South Carolina, you know, the idea was to demonstrate the utility of that concept of an area that is there, and to allow the stocks to rebuild, but not necessarily to fish, and so I would just encourage the council, in the future, to just kind of stay connected to that, and we talked about, yes, artificial reefs are designated as -- I think Roger -- The ones that are SMZs are considered habitat areas of particular concern, and so that's just something to consider for the future, and I'm sorry for bringing it up now, and it actually -- The idea came up way long ago, but that's why my hand was originally raised, way back in the beginning there, and so I just wanted to throw that out there for future consideration, as we deal with habitat and how habitat and these very important fisheries intersect in our management of those fisheries, and so that was it. Thank you for indulging me.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you very much, Mel. Those were very good comments on artificial reefs and their value. I guess now we will move to agenda topics for the spring HEAP meeting, and so, Kathleen.

MS. HOWINGTON: A lot of this was actually just brought up in the workplan, and so it worked out, but I have brought up the two, and, currently, right now, for the agenda, we're going to be discussing the EFH five-year review, and, of course, hopefully finalizing recommendations for those three subcommittees. We're going to be discussing the inclusion of wind energy and our energy exploration, development, transportation, and hydropower relicensing policy. Work is already ongoing, and they are on time for finishing in April.

Then the annual habitat activities report, and that was the outline that you just looked at, and so we're going to be discussing that, finishing it, and hopefully submitting it to you in time for the June 2024 meeting. Of course, we'll be reviewing progress on habitat website pages, reviewing any habitat program communication strategy that has been developed, after hopefully finishing those pages, and fingers crossed, and then getting our citizen science update.

I did separate out other topics of interest, because I recognize that, like Trish said, thirteen topics is a lot for a two-and-a-half-day meeting, and so, just based on this workplan, and you guys have already given me feedback on potentially moving back the space program discussion, and then I believe potentially moving back the tide and living shoreline project as well, to the fall meeting,

and that was something that Trish suggested. Does anybody else disagree or agree or thoughts or feelings? I am getting head nods of moving those back. Okay, and so we're going to move those back. All right.

Okay, and then the agenda topics would then -- I do not have a Word version of this, and so the agenda topics that you all approve would be everything but this -- So not that and then not this, and so that would be the agenda for your approval, correct?

MS. MURPHEY: Does everybody approve of this, this list? Do I have a motion? Myra.

MS. BROUWER: I am wondering -- The communications strategy, and I was looking at that, the habitat program communication strategy, and I wonder if that might not be something that we would need a little bit more time, Kathleen, and I know the OCAP met in the fall, and we didn't have a whole lot to share with them that they could give us feedback on, and so maybe wait until the fall, once we've migrated and determined how we're going to display all the habitat tools and things on the website, and perhaps -- You know, that would be my suggestion.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, Myra. Is everyone good with that suggestion? All right, and so I need a motion. Tom.

MR. ROLLER: **I move that we approve the agenda items for the Habitat Protection and Ecosystem-Based Management Advisory Panel for the spring 2024 meeting.**

MS. MURPHEY: Do I have a second? Carolyn. Any discussion? Monica.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Just a question, and is that a Charleston meeting that's in the spring?

MS. HOWINGTON: Yes, ma'am.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Thank you.

MS. MURPHEY: **Any objections to this motion? Seeing none, the motion carries.** We are at 11:59, and we saved a minute, and I will call this meeting adjourned.

(Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on December 7, 2023.)

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Certified By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Transcribed By  
Amanda Thomas  
February 5, 2024

Dec. 7, 2023

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Dec. 7, 2023  
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- Monica Smit-Brunello
- John Walter
- David Hugo
- Miles Dover
- Jamal Ingram
- Dominique Bazarro
- Martha Goyas



## Attendee Report: SAFMC December 2023 Council Meeting (12/4/23 - 12/8/23)

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9 hours 41 minutes

### # Registered

227

### # Attended

131

## Staff Details

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Yes Interest Rating Not applicable for staff Last Name Council First Name South Atlantic Email Address administrator@safmc.net

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